United Nations

Daily Highlights

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WEDNESDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ Secretary-General and German Chancellor, meeting in Bonn, stress need for involvement of United States and Russian Federation in restarting peace process in former Yugoslavia.

+ Secretary-General discusses situation in Rwanda and role of UNAMIR with Belgian Foreign Minister; Special Representative meets with Rwandese Defence Minister and RPF as efforts to end violence continue.

+ Special Representative Akashi and UNPROFOR Commander meet with Serbian President in effort to resume peace talks in Bosnia and Herzegovina; Co-Chairmen of International Conference to meet with Bosnian Serb leader.

+ Condemning bomb attack on bus in Hadera, Secretary-General urges Israeli Government and PLO to continue talks and implement Declaration of Principles without delay.

+ President of Mozambique announces country's first multi-party elections to be held on 27 and 28 October.

+ Working group on military aspects of possible peace-keeping deployment in Abkhazia, Georgia, meets in Geneva.

+ IAEA participates in first joint expedition to assess radioactivity levels in seas around Japan and Korean Peninsula.

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Continuing his visit to Bonn, Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali met today with Federal Chancellor Helmut Kohl and discussed, among other issues, the possibility of permanent membership of the Security Council for Germany and cooperation between that country and the United Nations. Regarding the former Yugoslavia, they both stressed the need for the active involvement of the United States and the Russian Federation in restarting the peace process.

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Yesterday, the Secretary-General met with Foreign Minister Klaus Kinkel and discussed the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina, particularly in Gorazde, and the question of post-war reconstruction in the former Yugoslavia. Dr. Kinkel expressed full support for the actions taken by the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR).

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali met last night in Bonn with Belgian Foreign Minister Willy Claes to discuss the situation in Rwanda, according to a United Nations spokesman. In particular, they discussed the role of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda (UNAMIR) and the problem of Burundian refugees there. Mr. Claes asked the Secretary-General to investigate the murder of 10 Belgian peace-keepers in Kigali on 7 April. The Secretary-General said he would report to the Security Council on the situation as soon as possible. Meanwhile, Special Representative Jacques-Roger Booh-Booh continued his efforts to end the violence, and met today with Rwanda's Defence Minister and representatives of the Rwandese Patriotic Front (RPF).

RPF forces continued their advance into Kigali today, while UNAMIR peace-keepers consolidated their positions in the city and the demilitarized zone, the spokesman said. The peace-keepers were doing all they could to aid those in need, and were sharing their dwindling supplies with thousands of people seeking refuge from the fighting. The 260 peace-keepers from Ghana who had been trapped yesterday in Byumba left that city without suffering any casualties and rejoined the rest of their battalion in the demilitarized zone.

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Special Representative Yasushi Akashi and the Commander of the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR), General Bertrand de Sauville de Lapresle, met today in Belgrade with Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic. In what a United Nations spokesman termed "a good meeting," they discussed the resumption of the negotiating process in the former Yugoslavia. Meanwhile, the Co-Chairmen of the International Conference on the Former Yugoslavia, Thorvald Stoltenberg and Lord Owen, were due to meet in Pale with Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadzic.

The spokesman went on to report that Bosnian Serb authorities were detaining 11 French relief workers accused of smuggling ammunition, although an International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) representative had been allowed to visit them. Meanwhile, the situation of the United Nations military observers in Bosnia and Herzegovina was mixed; those in Pale had been advised not to move around, but were not being prevented from doing so, while those in Banja Luka had been confined to their quarters. A Dutch military observer was still missing and there was no indication as to his whereabouts.

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali today strongly condemned the bomb attack on a passenger bus in Hadera, Israel, in which six Israeli civilians were killed and many more were injured. Also condemning the recent escalation of violence, he urged the Israeli Government and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) to continue talks and to implement the Declaration of Principles without delay.

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President Joaquim Chissano of Mozambique has announced that his country will hold its first multi-party elections on 27 and 28 October. The elections will be held in accordance with the Electoral Law enacted following the General Peace Agreement for Mozambique. Security Council President Colin Keating (New Zealand) told correspondents last night that the elections would be very important for peace in Mozambique.

In February, the Council said an elected government should assume office in Mozambique by the end of November. It also asked the Secretary-General to prepare a timetable for completion of the mandate of the United Nations Operation in Mozambique (ONUMOZ).

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A working group on military aspects of a possible peace-keeping deployment in Abkhazia, Georgia, met yesterday in Geneva under the chairmanship of Special Envoy Edouard Brunner, according to a United Nations spokesman. Representatives from the Georgian and Abkhaz sides, and observers from the Russian Federation and the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE), are attending the meeting, which is expected to last until Friday.

In a Presidential statement last Friday, the Security Council stressed the need for progress on a political settlement in the next round of talks between the Georgian and Abkhaz sides, so that it might consider establishing a peace-keeping force. The Council also supported the deployment of an extra 50 military observers with the United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia (UNOMIG) if the Secretary-General considered that conditions on the ground were appropriate.

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The first joint expedition to assess radioactivity levels in the seas around Japan and the Korean Peninsula, where nuclear waste has been dumped by the former Soviet Union and the Russian Federation, will end on 16 April. According to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), scientists from Japan, the Republic of Korea, the Russian Federation and the Agency's Marine Environment Laboratory are taking part in the month-long expedition.

Preliminary measurements have found very low concentrations of caesium 137, a major radionuclide in sea water and sediments. Detailed analysis of samples will be performed and the results published within 12 months. Further collaborative studies are planned for other sea areas where nuclear waste has been dumped.

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